Emperor proved a debauchee and when, after a brief reign, he was gathered to his fathers (A.D. 1), the Wang family reasserted itself and Wang Mang was made regent of the new Emperor, a boy of eight years.

Wang Mang now became more popular and powerful than ever, maintaining his simple manner of life, giving the government vast sums for distribution among the poor, founding a national university, and gathering scholars from all over the land. The boy Emperor died in A.D. S, poisoned, so rumor declared, by the Wang family for showing too much independence. An infant was placed on the throne and Wang Mang was made Acting Emperor.

Shortly, in A.D. 8, Wang Mang, with great show of reluctance, deposed the puppet and declared himself in name what he had been in fact.

Wang Mang took the title of Hsin Huang Ti, the "New Emperor," and called the dynasty which he believed he was establishing by the name of Hsin. Because his attempt soon failed, thus making it obvious that he had not received the mandate of Heaven, and because he violated one of the cardinal Confucian virtues, that of loyalty of a minister to his prince, orthodox Chinese historians have heaped anathemas upon his memory. He seems, indeed, really to have cared little for the interests of the people and to have sacrificed them ruthlessly to attain his own ends. He attempted far-reaching innovations, but these presumably must be attributed to Confucian scholars whose cooperation he won.

For more than a century an occasional voice had been raised in high places in protest against some of the obvious injustices of the times. Much of the land was held in great estates and high

rentals were charged the luckless cultivators. Slaves, too, were cruelly treated. Masters had the power of life or death over them and not infrequently exercised it. Over these and other inequalities some of the educated evinced marked concern. In doing so they were true to what had been, at least since the middle of the Chou dynasty, one of the characteristics of much of Chinese scholarship at its best, devotion to the welfare of the populace. Wang Mang, who had long been surrounding himself with scholars among whom were doubtless many social idealists, endeavored to put into operation some of the suggested reforms, and in doing